

is noticeably missing from the analysis. Could the framings of the figures, doubles, bodies, and the food not also be significant in communicating the Hitchcock brand?

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**James McDowell, *Happy Endings in Hollywood Cinema: Cliché, Convention and the Final Couple*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014. 218 pp. ISBN 978-0-7486-9977-3.**

In *Happy Endings in Hollywood Cinema*, James MacDowell examines both how critics have construed the happy ending as well as how references to happy endings have become a trope in Hollywood films, although it is a trope that is often qualified in films (133). The work functions as a critique of the tendency, which appears perhaps too often in film scholarship as judged by the examples MacDowell provides, for film scholars to draw overly broad conclusions.

After a chapter that examines the characteristics of the conjoined narrative devices—the final couple and the happy ending, the book goes on to look at the happy ending in relation to closure, unrealism, and ideology. MacDowell shows how the conventional assumptions about happy endings stem from a lack of attention being paid to detail: not only the details of the film’s ending but the details of the narrative prior to the ending. A film must prepare its ending, by establishing the trajectory of the couple toward one another, for example, and the various ways that a film does this can lead to various degrees of openness or closure as well as different degrees of happiness. MacDowell’s reading of *The Graduate* (1967) exemplifies how readings of endings that ignore the details of the preceding narrative can tend to fall back on generalizations about endings.

An interesting discussion that recurs in the book concerns an interesting (although commonplace) assumption: that there can be “a happy ending taking place after the end” of the film, a possibility implied, for example, by the ending of *Sideways* (2005) (122). Such speculation takes the (neo)formalist story/plot distinction to intimate the notion of a narrative to include not only inferences that can be drawn about what has happened prior to a film’s beginning, but what will happen after the final credits have rolled as well. The film ends but the narrative (more specifically, the story) is forever.

MacDowell surmises that the final couple of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* will eventually part ways after the film's ending (124). Does the final couple continue beyond the end of the film, escaping Henry James' geometric circle, which James posited in the 1907 preface to *Roderick Hudson* and which MacDowell refers to recurrently in the text? Or does the circle simply expand with the imagination of the spectator contemplating future –unscripted– narrative developments?

Some of the interpretations of the films and their endings in the book's first three chapters would have benefitted from paying closer attention to the social and cultural aspects being represented in the film. This is done to a degree, most importantly by considering the impact of the MPAA Production Code on the representation of happiness during the Code Era, but MacDowell pointedly sidesteps such readings, encouraging future works to probe the ideology of happy endings more deeply than he has (134). While the readings would have benefitted from such concerns, their absence should not be construed as a central weakness. Firstly, the attention to the films' narrative detail more than compensates for any absence of social-cultural analysis, perhaps even strengthening a number of the analyses by retaining a clear focus on the subject at hand. Secondly, Chapter four, which functions, it should be pointed out, as an opening salvo in the approach that MacDowell hopes future works will take, also indicates the constrictions preconceived notions of ideology place on interpretation.

Throughout, MacDowell challenges what he describes as the prevailing assumptions about happy endings, which he claims are unwarranted in terms of both the correctness of those assumptions and the faulty quantitative basis for those assumptions. While he thoroughly addresses the former by offering close readings of films that have been taken to paradigmatic examples that support the assumptions, he does not offer any quantitative evidence that supports the claim the assumptions are as widespread as he claims or that the number of films that do or do not live up to those assumptions warrants rethinking those assumptions. While the book would have been strengthened by quantitative evidence to undergird these two claims, the absence of such evidence is not fatal to MacDowell's arguments. It is mentioned here more nearly to suggest a field for further inquiry than to challenge MacDowell's conclusions about critical assumptions or Hollywood films. An example of MacDowell's approach can be found in his discussion of unrealism and happy endings. He notes that "Paradigmatic pronouncements ... may apply to some actual, existing endings, but neces-

sarily all.” He goes on to note, as he does throughout the work, that endings “vary from film to film” (116). This points to a basic dilemma of film scholarship: the application of generalities to the multitude of specific occurrences which are similar enough to warrant the generality yet varied enough to warrant MacDowell’s critique.

MacDowell delightfully equates the conservatism of film scholarship -- understood here as the tendency to read clichéd meanings (and implied effects) into closed and open endings, into happy final couples, and so forth -- with the conservatism of the PCA (151). While more than a few film scholars might be a bit chagrined to be aligned with Joseph Breen in their conception of the effects of endings on spectators, *Happy Endings in Hollywood Cinema* is a welcome contribution to the study of film narrative. As an antidote to the prevailing critical tendencies and through its focus on the final couple and happy endings, the work probes what Celestino Deleyto has identified as the “ambiguity and variety” of happy ending convention in the romantic comedy genre (quoted on p. 192). It would not be setting the bar too high to claim that MacDowell’s work, with its awareness of “the tensions between repetition and variation which lies at the heart of ... the ‘happy ending’” (25) offers a template for examining the ambiguity and variety that surely characterizes all filmic conventions.

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**William C. Martel, *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 535 pages. ISBN 978-1-107-08206-9.**

William C. Martel’s *Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy* is a compelling and important book on the evolution of grand strategy from the ancient societies to the modern states and on the development of American grand strategy from George Washington to Barack Obama. The book begins with chapter one presenting the book’s core arguments, its contributions to the field and chapter two reviewing the literature of American grand strategy. The other nine chapters are structured into the three main parts of the book.

Part I, *Makers of Grand Strategy*, includes four chapters. Chapter three shows Martel’s efforts to define grand strategy. Also, Martel underlines that